

Talking Points

Expanded Food Assistance Program

- **Expanded Food Assistance Program** authorized via a waiver approved by the U.S. Food and Nutrition Service.
- Program approved for **one year** – March 1, 2004-Feb. 28, 2005.
- Purpose is to allow childless work-ready unemployed and underemployed adults to collect Expanded Food Assistance benefits **beyond current time limits** – three months of benefits in any three-year period.
- Expanded Food Assistance was approved because of **continuing economic sluggishness** in the state, leading to increased demands on local food banks. The program will relieve some of this pressure and support families struggling to put food on the table.
- About 8,000 of 27,440 current Food Assistance customers will **automatically receive extended benefits** for up to one year. About 6,000 of these customers lose benefits each month.
- FIA specialists will do case reviews and determine appropriate eligibility for the **balance of current recipients**.
- Another **38,000 adult medical program recipients** will be able to apply for Expanded Food Assistance benefits and qualify for up to a year of benefits.
- Another **35,000 Michigan residents** not currently receiving benefits may also become eligible.
- The **total number of childless adults** receiving Food Assistance could grow to between 75,000-90,000 during the first year the waiver is in effect.

- In the most recent period (2002), Michigan ranked 6th among the states in **Food Assistance participation** and is the highest ranking industrial state.
- In December 2003 the **average Food Assistance benefit** was about \$79 a month per person. A one-person household without income receives \$141 in benefits per month. A two-person household without income receives \$259 in benefits per month.
- Michigan's Food Assistance Program caseload has **increased more than 50 percent in four years** – from 254,923 in December 2000 to 392,039 in January 2004.
- The **waiver could result** in an additional \$62-\$152 million being spent in the Michigan economy.
- Outreach is being done through press releases, interviews, posters being placed in food banks, pantries, homeless shelters and other human service agencies in local communities.
- Applications for the Expanded Food Assistance Program can be made at any local Family Independence Agency office.